



CITY OF MILWAUKEE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Hyundai and Kia offering free fix to prevent vehicle thefts**

### **Joint statement from Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs and Alderman Khalif J. Rainey**

Just a few weeks after we demanded an immediate free and effective solution from Kia and Hyundai to prevent certain models of their vehicles from being easily stolen, the companies have announced a free software upgrade that they say can prevent thefts.

The software update extends the length of the alarm (sound) and requires the key to be in the ignition to turn the vehicle on, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

More than 8 million vehicle owners are eligible, and **the companies will offer the free updates starting at the end of February.**

We are pleased to see this potential fix to the Kia and Hyundai theft crisis, and we are looking forward to seeing the impact of the adjustment here in the City of Milwaukee. Far too many unwitting Kia and Hyundai owners here have been victimized and have had their lives negatively impacted – some multiple times.

As we have previously stated, we believe Kia and Hyundai – through their own negligence – have caused harm to city residents and to the City of Milwaukee. For that, we fully expect the city to continue to weigh legal options and possible remedies.

If you are a Kia or Hyundai owner, you can find out if you are eligible for the free update by contacting the companies:

- Hyundai (toll-free at **800-633-5151**)
- Kia (toll-free at **800-333-4542**)

-More-

The uptick in thefts started following a viral TikTok challenge that exposed a flaw that makes the cars easy to steal, and TikTok videos literally showing viewers how to steal cars made from 2015 to 2019 (those without push-button ignitions and immobilizing anti-theft devices) spread nationwide.

According to Milwaukee police, the theft rate of the affected vehicles in the city has been staggering:

- 2021: 3,561 Kias stolen and 3,409 Hyundais stolen
- 2022: 2,540 Kias stolen and 2,133 Hyundais stolen
- 2023 (Jan. 1, 2023 through Feb. 13, 2023): 239 Kias stolen and 188 Hyundais stolen